MISCELLANEOUS.

VERSES BY LI T'AI PO.

TRANSLATED BY JAMES BLACK.

[Li T'ai Po (705-762) was a wonderfully romantic figure and a born poet. The words he wrote of another poet may well be applied to himself:

"Still shall the poet's name a day-star shine
When clean eclipsed his lord's imperial line.
Inspired, he writes, and, writing, shakes the hills,
And, wrought the luminous line, with pride he thrills."

For an account, all too brief, of his riotous youth, his glittering manhood, his embittered later life, the interested reader may be referred to Professor Giles's *History of Chinese Literature.*

The following extract from one of the prefaces of his "Collected Works" describes the occasion on which these verses were written, and gives a characteristic glimpse of the T'ang court and some of its personages: the Emperor Ming Huang-ti, the favorite T'ai Chen Fei, the eunuch Kao Li-shih, and the poet himself.

"Having obtained four species of peony, a red, a purple, a pink and a white, the Emperor ordered them to be planted in the palace grounds east of the Hsing Ching pond, fronting the Chen Hsiang pavilion, and when the time had come that the flowers were blooming in great profusion, the Emperor rode there one night in his night-chariot, and T'ai Chen Fei followed him in a wheeled sedan. He ordered also the best of the palace musicians to come thither, making sixteen instruments in all. Li Po, who was famous for leading the music, was about to start the musicians, when the Emperor suddenly said: 'With those beautiful flowers and T'ai Chen Fei, why should we use the old songs?' and he ordered Li Po to take the imperial tablets and write something new. Li gladly obeying, though still somewhat affected with wine, took the pencil and wrote three verses to the tune called 'Ching Ping Tiao.' The poem finished, he presented it to the Emperor, who ordered the musicians to try it with the music, and Li to sing it. T'ai Chen Fei, holding in her hand a costly goblet of West Liang raisin wine, received the song with smiles, and, wishing to do honor to it, the Emperor ordered the jewelled flutes to be used, that the music might be played in harmony, and he wished that at the end of each verse the melody might be prolonged. This he did to please T'ai Chen Fei, who having finished her wine, gathered up her embroidery, and bent before him repeatedly. Thenceforth the Emperor looked upon Li as the greatest of all the Hanlin scholars, and he ordered Kao Li-

shih to undo his shoes, which the latter considered a great humiliation. Another day, Kao-Li-shih, hearing T'ai Chen Fei constantly humming the song, said: 'At first you seemed to dislike Li Po intensely, what has made you change your mind?' T'ai Chen Fei was startled by the question, and replied (as she really disliked Li Po): 'How is it that those Hanlin scholars insult people so?' Li-shih replied: 'In comparing you with Fei Yen, surely he has insulted you greatly.' T'ai Chen Fei thought that truly this was the case. It seemed that the Emperor had many times desired to confer upon Li Po an official title, but had always been prevented by the influence of the palace women. (And so intrigues were renewed against Li which bade fair to cost him his life.) But Li, in the course of his travels, had once visited Ping Chow, and there made the acquaintance of a local ruler of Fen Yang, at that time serving with the troops, and him he had rescued from a certain punishment, and greatly encouraged, so much so that he himself came near being involved in the same trouble. This man had now accomplished some meritorious work for which the Emperor was to reward him with certain dignities, but he came forward and asked that his reward should be the ransom of Li Po. To this the Emperor acceded, being thus enabled to save the poet. Such was Li Po's knowledge of men, and such was the ruler of Fen Yang's manner of requiting a kindness shown him."]

Cloud-like her garments, and her face a flower.
Spring zephyrs waft their fragrance through her bower.
Surely I saw her on Chun-yu's magic mount,
Or 'neath the glistening moon on Yao-tai tower.

A garland she, dew-drenched, rich, fragrant, fair.
Sadly the Wu-shan maids with her compare.
In what Han palace could you find her like?
'T was art that rounded Fei Yen's beauty rare.

Imperial flower and kingdom-conquering queen,
Both by the Emperor's smiling eyes are seen.
Ill-will, that wind-like blows, be far from here.
See; on the Chen Hsiang latticed fence they lean.

Note.—"Chun Yu mount," the hill of jade; "Yao tai tower," the jewelled tower; "Wu shan," the fairies' hill (all fabled, not real, places inhabited by beautiful women); "Han," the Han Dynasty, one of the emperors of which had a favorite named Fei Yen; "Chen Hsiang pavilion," a pavilion in the palace grounds at Chang-an, the T'ang capital.

"EVOLUTION OF THE DIVINE."

BY DR. JAMES G. TOWNSEND.

In addition to those incisive comments made by Dr. Carus on Mr. A. E. Bartlett's most suggestive study of a great theme, may I be permitted to add a few words of commendation and criticism? (See Mr. Bartlett's article in the June issue, and the editorial discussion entitled "The God-Problem.")

In the assertion that the mind must work in the circle of the "infinite and the eternal" Mr. Bartlett has made a brave plea for the sufficiency of the intellect to find a solution of the problems which confront it. "The universe